

complexity, sediment and shoreline stabilization, primary productivity, and nutrient cycling.

Otter trawls and skimmer trawls are used to harvest shrimp from Bogue Sound. Otter trawls are conical nets towed behind vessels that are kept open by water pressure on otter boards or doors that are attached at the forward edges of the nets. Skimmer trawls have nets on each side of the boat supported by a metal frame that skims the bottom on a weighted shoe and pushed through the water (West et al. 1994). Shrimp landings in Bogue Sound from 1995 to 2005 have averaged approximately 30,451 pounds per year with the number of participants varying from 34 to 7 using otter trawls and 27 to 4 using skimmer trawls (Table 1).

There have been several studies looking at the effects of trawling on bottom habitat (MSC 1996; Auster and Langton 1999; DMF 1999; Collie et al. 2000; ASMFC 2000). However only a few studies have specifically addressed affects of trawling over SAVs, and they did not occur in North Carolina. Results from studies in other areas or similar benthic habitat types may intuitively be applied to what the effects of trawling on SAVs may be. Guillen et al. (1994) found a 45% loss of seagrass beds (*Posidonia oceanica*) in the western Mediterranean Sea. In the Gulf of Mexico, it was noted that trawling by larger vessels in deep water (2-3 m) through SAV resulted in the edges of SAV being ripped up and masses of SAV were observed floating on the surface following the opening of shrimp season. It was also noted that shallow SAV beds were not affected by trawling except during high tides when beds were more accessible (Eleuterius 1987).